

AKRON APOSTOLIC TEMPLE

THE HISTORY OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

A PAPER SUBMITTED FOR THE USE OF

AKRON APOSTOLIC TEMPLE

ARCHIVES

BY

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Introduction

Compared to most denominations that have been established in the United States the Apostolic faith is quite young. Yet, the Apostolic Pentecostal movement is currently one of the fastest growing denominations in the United States. As an Apostolic believer I do realize that there may be certain biases that affect the construction of this paper. Yet, it is this writer's intention of representing the history of the Apostolic faith in a manner that is objective as well as also being informative of our current belief system. A teaching normally has a direct correlation to its founder. For example Lutherans, Wesleyans, Baptists, Methodists, Bhuddists, Moravians, and Quakers all receive their names from the practices of those who established it. Charles Fox Parham is documented as the first one who literally sought the tongues experience with the Holy Ghost, but yet he only received a revelation of the teachings that were originally taught by the apostles in the book of Acts. Hence, we are known as Apostolics because we continue to practice this same doctrine that was not founded by Parham per se, but the apostles themselves.¹ There is however a unique difference between the denomination of Apostolic Pentecostals and other denominations.²

Early Pioneers of the Apostolic Faith

On January 1, 1901 Charles Fox Parham, a young minister who taught a group of students in a small Bible School in Topeka, Kansas sought out to uncover a genuine experience with God as spoken in the book of Acts. Foster also writes concerning Parham that:

¹ Acts 2vv. 38-42.

² M.W. Basset, "Life Tabernacle United Pentecostal Church: The Pentecostal FAQ"; available from <http://www.liberty-controls.net/ALTUPC/articles/pentfaq.htm>; Internet; accessed 25 February 2007.

The unusual significance concerning the Topeka outpouring is not that it was the first time in the modern age people had spoken in tongues, but that it was the first known experience of people's seeking for the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the expectation of speaking in tongues. "From this time Pentecostal believers were to teach that the baptism of the Holy Spirit should be sought, and that it would be received with the evidence of tongues. For this reason the experience of Agnes Ozman is designated as the beginning of the modern Pentecostal revival. The practices and teachings of the early church were again beginning to be brought into effect by the moving of God's Spirit. Many believed this was God's time to again restore to the church all that the New Testament church had, and by the grace of God, they were willing to stake everything on it."³

On April 12, 1906 an African American minister named W. J. Seymour who would later be known greatly in the Pentecostal community was baptized in the Holy Ghost and began to speak in tongues. Minister Seymour would later lead congregants in an old two story building on 314 Azusa Street which would be named the Azusa Street Mission.⁴ Under the Pentecostal umbrella, he would be the first to pastor at the Azusa Street location.⁵

In 1915 there arose some controversy in the Pentecostal movement that Jesus Christ was God. A year later in St. Louis Missouri a schism had developed between Pentecostals who had received the revelation of the Oneness of God and those who still held to be Trinitarian. A man by the name of Garfield Thomas Haywood acted as a spokesperson for those who had received the revelation that Jesus Christ was God. He began informing the other ministers that until this time, the organization which they were all presently in (Assemblies of God) had been in error concerning this issue. It was then that many of the ministers who felt this same conviction began leaving the convention.

³ Fred J. Foster. *Their Story: 20th Century Pentecostals*. (Hazelwood, Missouri: Word Aflame Press, 1986), 46.

⁴ Ibid., 58-60.

⁵ Marvin M. Arnold. *Apostolic History Outline*. (Washington, Michigan: Arno Publications Inc., 1986), "AD 1900".

Those individuals who felt this conviction soon founded the organization of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, which wouldn't officially be recognized until 1918.⁶



The shorter arrow to the left points to Akron Apostolic Temple's current pastor, Bishop Stanley B. Robinson Sr. The longer arrow to the right points to his father Elder Raymond L. Robinson who founded the church on 1301 Hart Street located in Akron, Ohio. This picture was taken in Los Angeles, California on August 27, 1954 during a Pentecostal Assemblies of the World Convention.

The church that this writer presently attends was founded in 1942 by Elder Raymond L. Robinson on 1301 Hart Street located in Akron, Ohio. It would later be known as Akron Apostolic Temple and would be moved to 599 Noble Avenue. One of the most notable characteristics of the Apostolic churches that were established in the early part of the century was that they consisted of both whites and blacks. This picture was taken during the beginning of the Civil Rights age which also began in 1954.

⁶ James L. Tyson. *Before I Sleep: A Narrative and Photographic Biography of Bishop Garfield Thomas Haywood*. (Indianapolis, Indiana: Pentecostal Publications, 1976), 36.

The Tenets of the Faith

Today, we still believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is our belief that one must also believe the preached word of God and repent from his/her sins in order to be saved. Obedience to the gospel message of Jesus Christ does not mean to just believe in the mere existence of the works of grace, but we must be baptized for our own sins in the name of Jesus Christ for its remittance (Acts 2:38). One of the earlier controversies when the apostolic doctrine was established in the United States was the practice of baptizing people in the auditory name of “Jesus Christ” as opposed to the more traditional way of “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”.

Oneness believers believe that since Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the roles of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then it is no crime to be baptized in Jesus’ name. Most Trinitarians would agree that support for a Trinitarian baptism would be found in Matthew 28:19. Apostolics would conclude that since this scripture refers to the specific name (singular) of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost that it would be necessary to only baptize in his name- Jesus Christ (Luke 24:47).

We do believe in the practice of speaking in other tongues as in the book of Acts 2v. 4. We believe that once a person is genuinely filled with the gift of the Holy Spirit he/she will speak in tongues accompanying. There is a distinction between receiving the Holy Ghost with the initial evidence of tongues and a person that has the gift of tongues and has need of an interpreter within a congregation. The latter is addressed by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 14vv. 28-29. Here Paul encourages some of the immature believers to speak two or three at the most to limit confusion and to keep the church in

order. On the day of Pentecost in the beginning of Acts we see that there are over one hundred and twenty people all speaking in tongues at the same time. These individuals were not utilizing the gift of tongues. These individuals were speaking in tongues at the same time and were only noted as receiving the Holy Ghost.

Current Worship Practices in an Apostolic Church

Worship should be an intricate part of any Christian assembly because it fulfills the desires of the God who created it. Worship is the prostrating of ourselves to the will and function of God, not only in outward appearance, but inward. The following worship statement contains statement structures listed in Norma DeWaal Malefyt and Howard Vanderwell's book, *Designing Worship Together*.⁷

Worship

Our worship is Apostolic. As we enter into the sanctuary it should be for the sole purpose of worshipping God who has revealed himself in the person of Jesus Christ. Our worship is monotheistic. Our belief is in one lord, one faith, and one baptism. We believe that God has manifested himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We also believe that in the person of Jesus Christ dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Meaning, that everything that makes God who He is, is found in Jesus Christ, the visible image of the invisible God. Everything we do and everything that we are stems from our theology and its relationship to our worshipping the one true God. We understand as does Aune that worship should produce something in us that should allow us to influence the world.⁸

⁷ Norma DeWaal Malefyt and Howard Vanderwell. *Designing Worship Together: Models and Strategies for Worship Planning*. (Herndon: Virginia, 2005), 88-89.

⁸ David Noel Freedman, ed., *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, Doubleday, 1992), s.v. "Early Christian Worship" by D. E. Aune, 973-989.

Worship Participation

Our worship is participatory. Never should any who enter into the sanctuary expect the minister to carry the totality of worship. Everyone in attendance is expected to participate fully in singing, praying, listening, and in the praising of the Lord, our God. It is permissible to respond to any sermon, message, testimony, prayer, or any other adoration of God by saying halleluiah, thank you Jesus, or Amen.

Charismatic Worship

Our Worship is vital, dynamic, and exuberant. As a congregation that believes in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we believe in allowing the Holy Ghost to have total control of our lives and the order of service. Expressions of worship such as prophesying, speaking in tongues, dancing, shouting, healing, the working of miracles, and the interpretation thereof are all deemed acceptable. However, we also carry the understanding that all services are to be carried out decently and in order. Any form of worship contradicting or offending any individual who is clearly in the will of God concerning his/her gift will be subject to immediate cessation of their gift.

Non Discriminative Worship

Our worship is inclusive of all ages. Everyone at all ages can play a part in worship. Jesus Christ exhibited no boundaries in regards to age and we do not also. However, in regards to baptism of children under the age of eighteen we require a parent's or a guardian's permission. We also prohibit infant baptism because it neglects the notion that baptism is the result of that individual's free will or desire. One is also prohibited to make demands on another person's salvation or baptism regardless of family status.

Provisional Elements of Worship

With the discovery of new technologies such as computer and internet databases, we view all such technologies as neutral. We will allow such technologies to be used in our worship services only if it is used to lift up the name of Jesus Christ. Any form of provisional worship deemed offensive to any active member will be subject to the pastor's discretion. Our worship should remain consecrated, but it should also be applicable in our present time and culture.

Conclusion

It may sound redundant to mention that the Apostolic church was first founded on the day of Pentecost over two thousand years ago, but that is exactly what happened. This writer is eternally grateful that the teachings of the faith never rested on the shoulders of a random personality, but instead rested on the shoulders of chosen apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.⁹ One may be tempted to debate the fact that early pioneers of the faith may have in fact lacked the revelation of the Oneness of God that was received a decade later. Yet, we must remember that Jesus Christ, the apostles, and prophets who were used in shaping the written word of God did not lack the truth of the gospel. If anything, we must endeavor to receive the revelation and inspiration that they themselves had.

⁹ Ephesians 2 v. 20-21

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